

## **MINUTES FROM APRIL 18 VICTIM SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING COORDINATING COUNCIL**

April 18, 2017

**Attending in person:** Leslie Brower, Yolanda Schlabach, Valerie Marek, Elisa Lehman, Veronica Colombo (DSP), Patti D'Angelo, Akilah Seeney (DSP), Elizabeth McCourt.

**Attending via phone:** Erica Davis and Rita Landgraf

Leslie Brower, the new Co-Chair, opened the meeting and sought approval for the Jan. 4 minutes. Approved and they will be posted to Public Meeting Calendar.

Leslie then led a discussion of the Human Trafficking Coordinating Council Annual Report. Valerie Marek said she would like to submit a response to an RFP from the Criminal Justice Council (CJC) for Victims of Crime Act funding. Elisa asked how much funding. Answer: \$3 million. The deadline is first week of May. Leslie said she would ask DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker for a letter of support. Elisa recommended asking for a full-time case manager for upstate and downstate and other things, all of which would ease the burden on law enforcement. Valerie said the response will include such items.

From there, the group transitioned to a discussion about emergency housing for victims of human trafficking. Veronica said there was a human trafficking case in which victim services had to spend the entire night with the victim. She said not have an ID, which most shelters require. Elisa said you can't access federal funds for emergency shelter. Elisa asked if there a bed identified for human trafficking victims. Elizabeth said that's a challenge because there is a cost associated with holding a bed and overall utilization rates go down. Leslie said as awareness grows, we expect the HT victim numbers to grow.

On the awareness front, Patti said the awareness posters are in their final phase, with posters to be added in Spanish, Mandarin and Creole, with culturally appropriate photos. Nancy McGee is finalizing the content. Looking to expand locations to motels/hotels. Veronica said urgent cares would be another good spot. Leslie said transportation venues need to be included with updates, too, as DeIDOT already has been a terrific partner with posters in its venues, rest stops, bus stops, etc.

On the services front, Elisa asked what other services partners with the subcommittee could provide to survivors when Child, Inc., takes them in. Leslie said the demands from victims are huge, sometimes five times what they are in terms of length or breadth of a sexual assault survivor.

To expand awareness, Yolanda said she has had multiple requests for her awareness presentation, including one at the Dover AFB on April 27. She already has trained 9,000 people in the last five years. Requesters often ask the same questions: What can we do to help? How can we plug into the infrastructure? Grant would help partners across the state to build a system. Leslie said awareness is focused on law enforcement right now, because their awareness needs to be raised, too.

Valerie said as the result of the Child Protection, juvenile human trafficking survivors could receive victim compensation. Elisa said there will be a statute of limitations. Valerie said it needs to be 20 years.

Elizabeth said there are red flags for human trafficking in certain categories of victims they serve. Sometimes, it's difficult to make the connection. She said if the right questions are asked, it sometimes turns out their own family is trafficking them.

Elisa asked how you do a needs assessment for human trafficking. One place to start is calls to YRS and DFS. Valerie said most of calls are from psychiatric hospitals. Veronica Colombo from DSP said Commissioner McDonough might be able to pull human trafficking cases for cumulative statistics. Elizabeth said there are agencies that are supporting victims and counting. Leslie said from those agencies providing services we need a count from them. Valerie said we need to give our victims a chance to self-ID.

Elizabeth said often providers work on the addiction or the mental illness instead of the underlying trauma – being a survivor of human trafficking. Elisa said we need to push out webinars to shelter providers. Leslie asked if offered, would people take such training. Elisa said yes. She recommended webinars customized for health care providers, behavioral health providers, etc. Valerie said it's important to tackle the stigma that women choose to traffick themselves. Mental illness and addiction often associated with trafficking. Teens who are survivors of trafficking have arrested development, Elizabeth said.

Patti asked how data collection could be done and if there is a model from other states. New Jersey is doing amazing data collection. Elisa said at a Philadelphia event, Covenant House and others were presenting new data. The full study will be released in June. A link to a CBS 3 report on that presentation:

<http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2017/04/17/new-study-shows-homeless-youth-targets-for-sex-traffickers/>

**Next steps:** Send out notes and look for Huffington Post story on homeless youth being trafficked:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/one-in-five-homeless-youth-trafficked-new-research\\_us\\_58f5032ee4b015669722517d](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/one-in-five-homeless-youth-trafficked-new-research_us_58f5032ee4b015669722517d)

Victim Services Subcommittee must file annual report in December with the Human Trafficking Coordinating Council. Leslie said she would like to see a one-page strategic plan. And a communications tool – five goals and what we're going to do.

## **LONG-TERM GOALS**

Collect/report numbers

## **SHORT-TERM GOALS**

Research data; extrapolate to Delaware.  
Describe patterns of victims – upstate vs. downstate. Identify better screening tool.  
How do other states collect data – Patti to check with Polaris and New Jersey.

Identify victims

Outreach to Salvation Army, addiction and mental health treatment programs, shelters, schools, foster care, YRS/DFS, psychiatric hospitals. Use webinars to build specialized services for population.

Build law enforcement partnership

Identify and support victims as part of investigation, arrest and prosecution of traffickers. AG, DSP, police during roll call, State Law Enforcement Conference.

Cultivate funding

Feds use state pass-throughs. Need local champions at state level that write or partner on grant applications. Need to be part of routine budget streams or find foundation support.

**Next meeting:** 10 am-noon May 23 in Conference Room 301 at DHSS' Main Administration Building.

Submitted by Jill Fredel, Director of Communications, DHSS  
May 8, 2017